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Golden in Glass

Emily Price
etprice@bgsu.edu

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Golden in Glass

Honors Graphic Design Senior Thesis

Emily Price

Artist Statement

The hymn chosen for this glass piece is “Jerusalem the Golden” which was written by Bernard of Cluny in the 12th century. It was translated and set to music by John Neale in the 19th century. The original tune given to the hymn is known as “Ewing” and was written by Alexander Ewing. Although this hymn is not used in all hymnals and is not as widely known as hymns like “Amazing Grace,” it is a lovely, hopeful one that paints a picture of the wonders of heaven.

Hymn singing is an important part of a church service in the Christian faith and has been for hundreds of years. Hymns are powerful and moving while at the same time helping the congregation both learn and remember the Word of God. Similarly, stained glass windows have also been a part of the church as a way to help people visually see and remember scripture since about the 10th century. The objective of Golden in Glass is to combine the traditional hymn and stained glass window into a new form that also draws inspiration from the icons and symbols that have been used in the church for just as long.

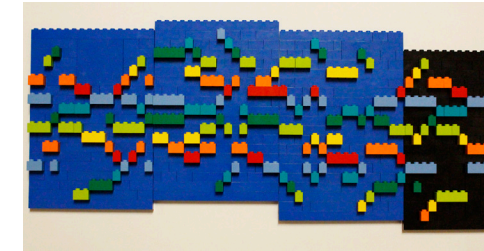
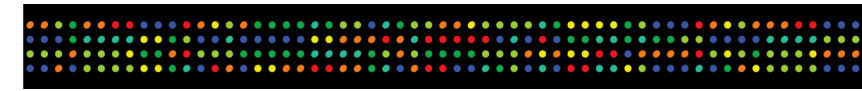
The final glass piece is made up of sixteen chords following the form of the first sixteen beats of the tune “Ewing” while the seven colors of colored glass represent the notes in the musical scale. The top glass piece of each chord holds one of the sixteen lines of text from the hymn along with an icon representing it.



A Hymn in Visual Form

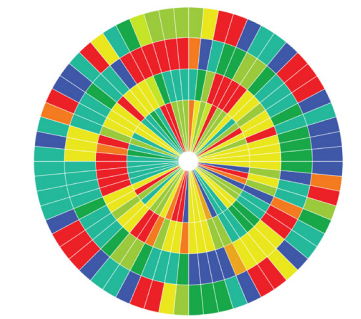
For my honors project, in combination with my graphic design senior thesis, I asked the question: how do I give an old, memorable hymn a new, graphic form for a modern audience? The best answer I have found so far is my glass piece *Golden in Glass*.

Since last spring, I have worked on finding the most successful way to graphically display a hymn. I began by working on the technical aspects of the music itself by creating player piano/MIDI file styled pieces. I enjoyed the fact that hymns are commonly made up of four lines of notes forming chords making them easy to work with. Also, since there are so many notes in a hymn, the pieces I was creating were thick and full of texture. As time passed, however, I realized that there were more aspects of hymns that I wanted to bring into my final piece that I was unable to in the direction I was going. These aspects, beyond just the notes, are the text along with the imagery that the text creates as it is sung by a church congregation.



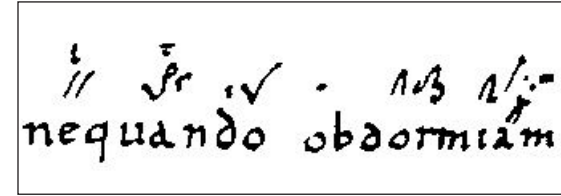
THE STAND E-^{VEN} WHEN STEE- ARE HAVE LAND; ^{STILL} ARE
 BUILT ON ROCK CHURCH SHALL PLES FALL- ING. CRUMBLD SPIRES EV- 'RY BELLS CHRA- AND
 THE CALL- ING,

Jerusalem
 the **Golden**,
 with
 milk and honey
Blest —
 the
 sight of it
 refreshes the
 weary and
 oppressed.
 I know not,
 oh,
 I know not
 what joys await us there,
 what radiancy of glory,
 what bliss beyond compare.

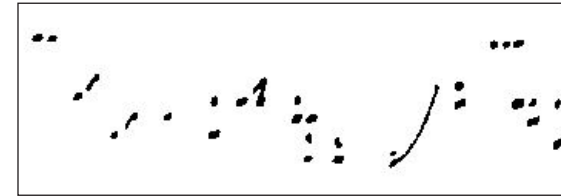


When I started questioning myself about what direction I wanted to go in, I turned back to my reasoning to pick my topic in the first place. I chose to work with hymns because they are something that I am very familiar with. Not only have I grown up with them, but I have also been playing them on piano for my congregation over the past six years. I am also specifically minoring in music on the organ in college so that I can learn how to better serve my church congregation on piano and organ in the future. Hymns are beautiful, powerful, hopeful, and enlightening to those in the church. They bring people together and allow everyone in a church to contribute and worship with those who believe the same things they do.

I learned, however, that hymns and other songs of praise were not always meant for everyone, although they certainly were at the start. In the Bible, there are multiple instances where psalms, worship songs, and instruments are mentioned as being used to worship God. In the 6th and 7th centuries, chants and other sacred music started to be written down as neumes and early polyphonic music. As the Catholic Church began to form and the 9th century rolled around, most common people could no longer understand or read Latin anymore so Church officials gave the music singing duties to the choir. Hymns were not brought back to the common people until after Martin Luther's Reformation in 1517 when he made it his goal to translate the Word of God into the common tongue. His form of hymn, now known as the Lutheran Chorale, is the basis of almost all hymns in any Protestant Church today.



Neume, 500s



Neume, 900s



Polyphonic song, 900s



Worcester Antiphoner, 1230s

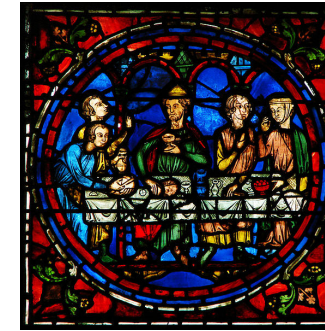


Lutheran Hymnal, 1531

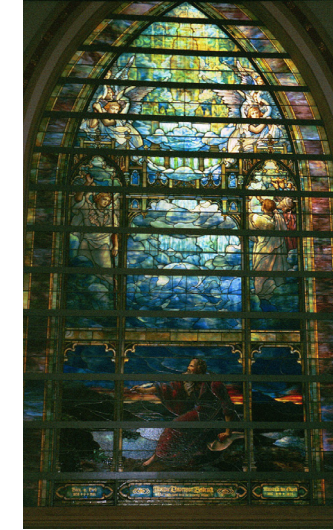
Interestingly enough, as people found themselves unable to sing or understand what was being taught or sung during the time between the 9th and 16th centuries, stained glass became popular (this popularity began sometime in the 10th century and dwindled into the 16th century). I chose to work with glass because it serves a similar purpose to hymns and had to fill this purpose on its own in the time I mentioned above. This purpose has been to help people both learn and remember scripture beyond just reading it.



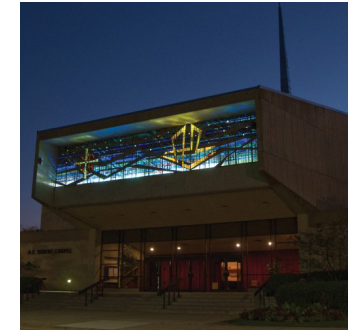
Augsburg Cathedral, 1065



Notre-Dame de Chartres
Cathedral, 1200s



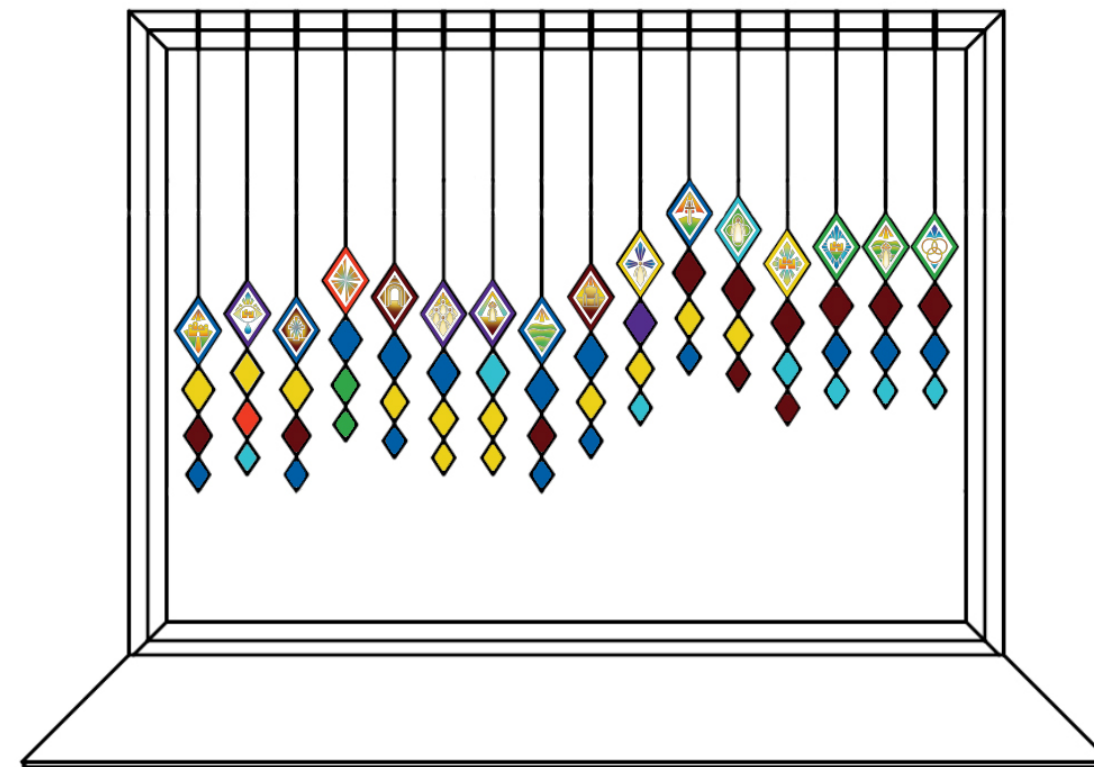
Brown Memorial Presbyterian
Church, 1905



A.F. Siebert Chapel, 1975

My final project is a large installation piece called *Golden in Glass* which is based on one of my favorite hymns called Jerusalem the Golden written by Bernard of Cluny in the 12th century. This writing, originally from a much larger work, was translated by John Neale in the 19th century and placed with the tune Ewing by Alexander Ewing to create the hymn. It is a well-structured hymn that was easy for me to work with in my project and is one of the most comforting hymns I know with some of the most visual lyrics. Also, it is a favorite of my WELS church body.

I took this hymn, which is 16 lines of text long and 16 beats per line wide, and created 16 individual icons for each line of text in each beat. Each beat is made up of four sheet glass diamonds which are colored to correspond with the four notes in the chord. The top note in each of the 16 chords holds the icon made up of three glued sheets of glass which hold two pieces of clear projector paper between them. One paper layer holds the outline of the icon and the other holds the colors.



In conjuncture with hymns and stained glass, icons and symbolism have also played a large part in the church as a means to help the congregation remember scripture. It was important for me as a graphic designer to create icons for this project since it is something that I have learned to do. By creating a faux stained glass piece, I was able to control the look of my icons far easier than if I had gone the traditional route. Most importantly, I feel that I was able to create something that referenced stained glass but became something new.

In addition to creating updated icons, the 16 glass chords hang from their white, window-like frame rather than remain fixed in place like traditional stained glass windows. The metal edging around each glass diamond looks very similar to the soldered edges of stained glass pieces, but instead is made from strips of lead flashing for a clean finish and easy use. Also, although my piece is very large like many stained glass windows at ten feet wide by seven feet tall, it is brought down near the ground for people to easily approach it and observe the details.

In the end, I wished to create something that spoke to the history of both music and imagery in the Church and how they have affected the congregation observing/listening to them. I wanted to create something new and old at the same time so that a newer audience might come to realize how beautiful these things are to the people who care about them. I believe that over my past year of research and work that I have found my own successful way of presenting a hymn in visual form.





Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest -



The sight of it refreshes the weary and oppressed.



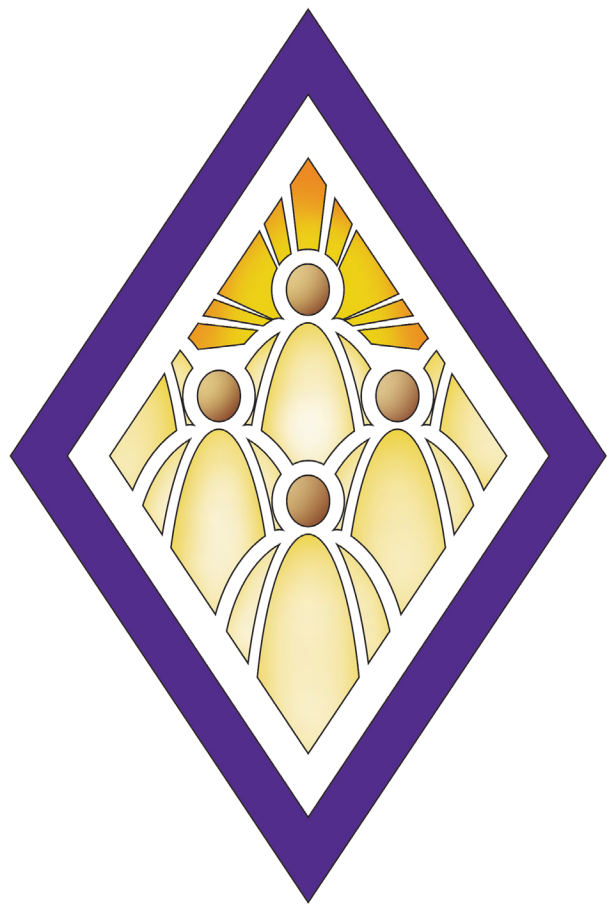
I know not, oh, I know not what joys await us there,



What radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare.



They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song



And bright with many an angel and all the martyr throng.



The Prince is ever in them; the daylight is serene;



The pastures of the blessed are ever rich and green.



There is the throne of David, and there, from care released,



The shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast;



And they who with their leader have conquered in the fight



Forever and forever are clad in robes of white.



Oh, sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect!



Oh, sweet and blessed country that eager hearts expect!



Jesus, in mercy bring us to that dear land of rest;



You are with God the Father and Spirit ever blest.

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The images on pages 6 and 8 were found on Wikipedia